



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



FRUIT DISH—EXHIBITED IN PARIS IN 1900

MARTELE, A NEW DISTINCTIVE SCHOOL

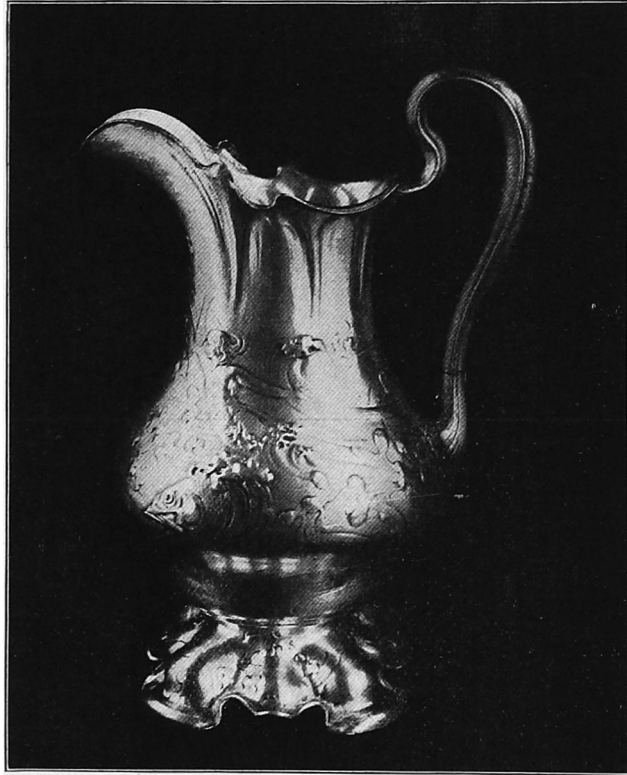
AMERICAN RENAISSANCE IN SILVERSMITHING

During the last few years there has been produced in this country beautiful handwrought silverware known as Martelé, which has not only received the approval of the American people but has been accorded favorable criticism in the art centers of the world. Many of these exquisite productions easily take rank with the best examples of the old masters in silversmithing. The fact that this is an American achievement will make a brief review of the conditions and circumstances which led to its accomplishment of interest to art-lovers in general.

In this connection it is scarcely necessary to trace in detail the history of silversmithing from earliest times. It is evident that the wonderful properties which render silver so available to the workman were well understood in the Old Testament times for we find frequent reference to the precious metals in Holy Writ. In Ancient Art and throughout all the periods of Christian Art in the various countries and nations, silver plays a particularly prominent part. Early in the Christian era, and especially after the conversion of Constantine, the art of silversmithing received the patronage of royalty and religionists. Then came the breaking up of the Roman Empire and we find in that conclusive period all art protected and nursed by the monasteries of the church, and whatever else a monk might be he was first of all a cunning worker in the precious metals. From the 12th to 15th centuries the demand for articles in silver steadily increased and with the expansion of the craft there were produced great quantities of rich and extravagant pieces of silver, many of which; however, were consigned to the melting pot in order that the metal might be reworked under the influence of the Renaissance in the latter part of the 15th century. And now as we pass on in our brief review of art silver, there looms before us that interesting character and master-craftsman, Benvenuto Cellini, whose delicate and dignified designs and exquisite repoussé chasing made the 16th century noteworthy in the history of silversmithing. Space forbids, and so we must resist the temptation to enlarge upon the interesting work in France during the wonderful reign of Louis XIV. and that of his successor, and to follow the influence upon English silversmithing of the French Huguenots, who left France after the edict of Nantes, bringing with them their well-trained skill and taste. Nor can we look into birth and development of that style known in France as "Louis Seize" and which in England is connected with the names of Flaxman and Wedgwood. We have said enough to show that silversmithing up to this time ranked as a fine art and that the examples of workmanship reflected the cunning hand and loving care of the artist as did any painting or piece of sculpture of the same periods.

Note—Illustrations used by courtesy of Spaulding & Co.

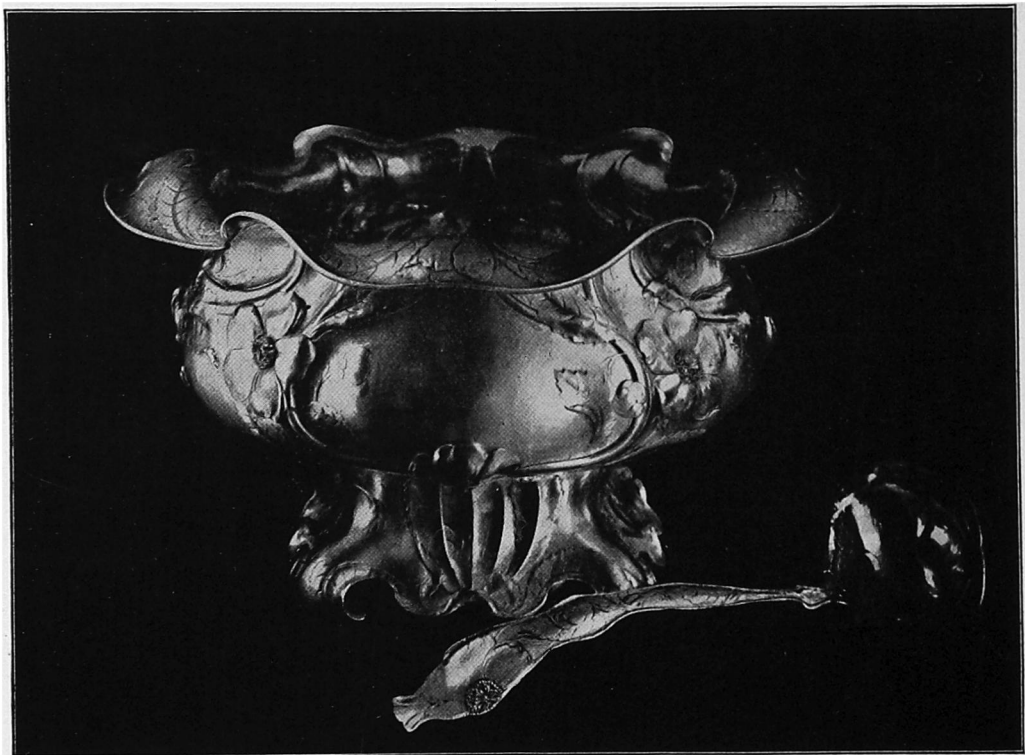
We are now brought to the early days of our own country and find that our ancestors depended upon England and other European countries for articles of luxury. There were American silversmiths in the pre-Revolution days, as our own well-known Paul Revere, but their work reflected the styles of the mother country and the trade scarcely sufficed for their support. There was no American style created. The



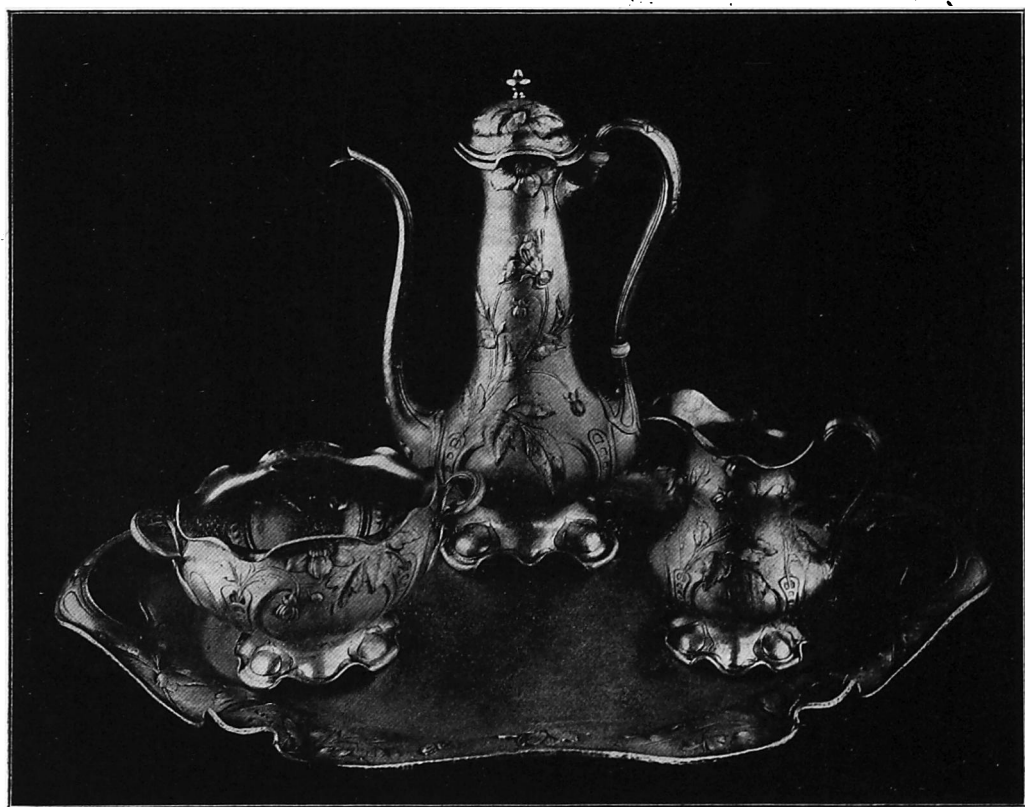
MARINE THEME—MERMAIDS, FISHES, GRASSES, ETC.

people of this country were busy with serious matters; there were the necessities of life to be secured; countless difficulties to be overcome. How these battles have been fought and won needs no mention here. Our industrial and mechanical victories stand out in bold relief and we can hold our heads up with all the world, but in Art what a different story, especially in the first three-quarters of the 19th century! In silversmithing the ability of the medieval and old-world workers in silver had been lost and artistic expression had been dominated by machinery.

The Centennial Exposition of Philadelphia in 1876 brought this country for the first time into direct competition with the world and our blinded eyes were opened. In silversmithing we were behind the



PUNCH BOWL AND LADLE—EXAMPLE OF HIGH RELIEF



COFFEE SET—EXAMPLE OF SEMI-RELIEF

rest of the world, and had before us a serious problem. The art spirit of the ancient metal workers had to be restored and we were not to be content merely to equal others in our products. Our ideal was far beyond that, and American silversmithing has progressed step by step, never satisfied with what had been done, but always striving to do better and approach nearer the high ideal. The advance made since 1876 was marked at Paris in 1889, in Chicago in 1893 and at Paris in 1900 when American silversmiths took the lead, receiving the award of the Grand Prix. The awakening which began at Philadelphia in 1876, and which has resulted in such remarkable pieces as are illustrated in this article, has been a progress of gradual development, well nurtured but not forced.

To Edward Holbrook of New York and William C. Codman of Providence is due more than to any others this advance. The best years of the lives of these men have been given to it.

It is not the province of this article to dwell upon American silversmithing as an industry, nor to show what wonderful strides have been made in mechanical work. It is true that the American market has been flooded with meretricious designs mechanically produced, due to the abuse of the possibilities of machinery, but the above-named gentlemen have so harmonized machinery and Art that there has been produced in this country beautiful silverware, which expresses the mind of the artist, and in which mechanical methods have been employed to save the labor of the hand without dominating the design. We mention this in passing to show the gradual process through which these gentlemen have developed silversmithing in this country until we have to-day that ware known as *Silver Martelé*, with which we are now concerned.

What then is *Martelé*? As the name, from the French, implies, it is fashioned by the hammer, beaten up from the raw bullion by hand under the supervision of the art director, or it may be by the designer himself. The production of these beautiful examples of silversmithing, which must be seen to be fully appreciated, was not an accident but the result of careful planning and patient study. Realizing the benefits which the medieval workers derived from their guilds, and the art influence surrounding their lives, Mr. Holbrook established several years ago, in his designing rooms at Providence, a school of handicraft for the development of true art principles and the creation of a distinct art atmosphere. Under the expert direction of Mr. William C. Codman, himself an artist and father of artists, designers and craftsmen have been brought closer together and there has been created an *esprit de corps* which has proved a most important factor in this restoration of the spirit of old days. Surrounded by examples of the best art in its various branches, painting, sculpture, ornament, etc., each member of the school is engaged to study and avail himself of the suggestive value of the past, and is given freedom to express his individual ideas in silver.

Not only is each craftsman permitted to work out his own ideals but he is given all the time he requires—he is never hurried. The result is

that there is no straining after effect but a development of real art in a natural and beautiful way. One cannot visit the studios in this great school without feeling the lofty purpose that permeates the place and noting how its art influence is gradually spreading through the whole country. The spirit which dominated Cellini and the old masters seems here to have been revived and in this American Renaissance in silversmithing we may well take pride.

In conclusion let us consider briefly some of the characteristics of this Martelé school. As we have said, it is a School of Freedom and follows no flag. Each piece shows the marks of the hammer with which it has been slowly fashioned into pleasing outlines revealing an appreciation of the beauty of form and exhibiting power of constructive ability as well as a delicacy and strength in manipulation. The ornamentation varies from the boldest relief to the most dainty tracery. Fishes and birds, flowers and leaves and other natural growths of field, forest and stream are largely represented. Occasionally cupid heads and figures of nymphs are seen, but as a rule, natural objects predominate and they are rendered with wonderful fidelity to the originals in grace and line modeling. No piece or design is ever reproduced and the art lover must recognize in these distinguished productions a happy return to the principles of earlier days and hail with delight the advent of American silversmithing as a living art in design as well as in technical execution.

HENRY C. TILDEN.



WHY FOSTER FOREIGN WORK?

To claim the American to be the best contemporary school of painting is not asserting much in its favor. This, at least, is the conclusion confirmed by observation during the summer months when I availed myself of every opportunity for comparison. If our artists would only aim to do a little better than the average foreigners, as I saw them represented, they would not need to aim very high. These men seem to be quite destitute of ideas, and the commonplaces which they paint have no trace of quality. In a permanent collection of modern paintings in a Roman gallery, many of them prize winners, I was astonished at the universal emptiness of the canvases. I found not one that I would have the courage to show in my gallery.

This collection, made under official auspices, and in the land of the great masterpieces of the past, was probably the worst I found, though just now I can recall none with redeeming features, with the single exception of one in Bale, where a room full of canvases by Arnold Böcklin made me forget all the others—and he is no longer living.

No doubt there are individuals in every country doing worthy work. We know how well a few of the Dutch artists are acquitting themselves, despite repetition and their too frequent note of sadness, and that in England and Scotland a small handful of men are fighting to maintain the old traditions against heavy Academy odds. Looking back at them all, school by school, it is quite safe to assert that we are far in the lead of any one of them.

WILLIAM MACBETH.